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Contact: John-Mark Hack, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy  
(502) 564-4627  
Doug Thomas, Kentucky Department of Agriculture  
(502) 564-4696

**State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$101,000 for Clark County  
Cattle Genetics Improvement Program**

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board voted today to approve a \$101,000 grant request submitted by the Clark County Livestock and Forage Council to establish a local cattle genetics improvement program. The award will reimburse half of the costs incurred by eligible Clark County cattle producers who choose to improve the genetic stock of their herds through the purchase of approved bulls or bull semen. The application was previously reviewed by the Clark County Agricultural Development Council and forwarded to the state board as a high priority item. Funds come from \$651,076 set aside for Clark County in the Agricultural Development Fund established with half of Kentucky's tobacco settlement proceeds.

The Livestock and Forage Council will administer the program in Clark County. Eligibility criteria and genetics standards were established by the state Agricultural Development Board in a standard genetics improvement program approved at the Board's February meeting. Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of cattle producers in Clark County to explore alternatives to replace lost tobacco income.

"This action means that Clark County cattle producers will be able to market an improved product to an increasingly discriminating consumer market. Investments in improved cattle genetics will yield returns for years to come. This is an investment in an aggressive producers looking for income alternatives, in their agricultural diversification efforts, and in the future of agriculture in one of our state's most progressive agricultural counties," said Governor Paul Patton.

The award was made as one of eleven projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$4,443,000 in state level projects, and \$403,600 in a variety of county-level programs, like the Clark County Cattle Genetics Improvement Program.

"The Clark County Livestock and Forage Council has taken a very progressive step in getting on board with the Genetic Improvement Program," Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith said. "This program will help make Kentucky cattle more desirable for cattle buyers and the end product more appealing for consumers."

"I think this program is an opportunity to gain better genetics and will help reduce the cost to our counties commercial and pure breed breeders," Stephen H Berryman of the Clark County Livestock and Forage Council said. "I think people need to look at this program and at least consider it if they want to improve his or her cattle herd."

The Clark County Livestock and Forage Council will announce implementation of the local program in the near future. Producers will apply directly to the local council to participate in the program. The commitment by the Board comes at just the time that cattle producers are purchasing new bulls for their cattle herds.